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SUCCESS STORY

Advancing the Mazar Water Supply Department

Modern management, goal setting, and computerization help to improve service and financial performance.



Photo: USAID/CAWSA

MWSD Director Eng. Abdul Jamil Maseh reviews payment collection records and congratulates his team for excellent performance.



Photo: USAID/CAWSA

The customer care intern computerizes a customer ledger. He helped computerize 5,000 customer ledgers. The original paper ledgers were in poor condition and difficult to manage.

The Mazar Water Supply Department (MWSD) is committed to providing better service to its customers by modernizing and improving its operations. Its 65 active deep wells produce more than 7,000 cubic meters of water per day – serving more than 17,000 residents of Mazari Sharif. MWSD is one of four urban water departments receiving support from USAID through its implementing partner International City/County Management Association (ICMA) as part of the Afghanistan Water and Sanitation Activity (CAWSA) Project. This project helps MWSD supply water to more neighborhoods in Mazar while improving water quality and enhancing operating efficiency.

With ICMA assistance, MWSD Director Eng. Abdul Jamil Maseh established rigorous targets for financial, technical, and commercial performance. The challenge is great because the water supply service has been operating with old infrastructure while charging about 60 percent less than needed to meet its operating costs. Thanks to determined leadership and new initiatives, revenues are up about 12 percent so far this year.

To improve commercial operations and financial sustainability, CAWSA recruited three interns to work daily with MWSD counterparts. One provides computer training, while the other two work in the finance and customer care departments, respectively.

The customer care intern has helped MWSD staff to computerize customer account ledgers, update past due accounts, and manage a customer service hotline. The department has computerized more than 5,000 customer ledgers, produced a list of past due accounts, and accelerated collections. The financial services intern has also assisted in the collection of past due payments and improved the quality of financial reports. With this help, the collections unit achieved record revenues of 2.1 million Afs (\$42,000) in January 2009, which is three times more than the prior month.

The positive impact of the interns on MWSD's capacity and revenue collection has spurred an expansion of the internship program. With innovative initiatives, modernization, and strong leadership, the MWSD will continue improving water service delivery to the citizens of Mazari Sharif.